King Midas

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by DarlingAsinis

Summary

Will Graham has been missing for exactly one year.

He was last seen leaving Quantico on a regular Wednesday, around 9:00 PM, after pulling a late shift doing paperwork. Traffic cameras followed him on his way out of the city; however, once he hit the highway, he was a ghost.

They found his car parked at his home in Wolf Trap, leading them to believe someone had taken him from the quaint farmhouse.

Is Will alive? Will he ever be found?

No Beta

Completed

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

Will Graham has been missing for exactly one year.

He was last seen leaving Quantico on a regular Wednesday, around 9:00 PM, after pulling a late shift doing paperwork. Traffic cameras followed him on his way out of the city; however, once he hit the highway, he was a ghost.

They found his car parked at his home in Wolf Trap, leading them to believe someone had taken him from the quaint farmhouse — which was true.

Inside the house, there didn't look to be any sign of struggle, and outside there was minimal evidence. Everyone on the team was dumbfounded, and without any clues, leads or DNA, the case went cold.

For the anniversary of Will's disappearance, Hannibal hosted a small, intimate dinner party, inviting everyone he knew Will was friendly with. This small group included Alana, Jack, Beverly, Jimmy and Brian – none of them knew of any others to invite, either. He knew Will was a private person, but he still felt a pang of sadness as the small, pathetic collection of souls who knew his Will. Hannibal couldn't even find the contact information for Will's father, nor if the man was even alive. He wanted Beau Graham to know about his son's disappearance, but it was evident that the two were estranged. Hannibal didn't know why, as Will never spoke of his childhood or family, but it pained him nonetheless.

He had taken in Winston and Buster; the rest of the dogs split between Alana and Beverly, while Jimmy and Brian took in Ellie together. It crushed him to separate the pack, but he couldn't take them all in nor go forever without any part of Will. His dogs were the closest part of him, and he held them tight each night.

The scent of Will had long since faded from his home, but the slightest trace remained on a flannel shirt Will had forgotten in the laundry basket; he wept when he found it, crying like he hadn't since he was a child forgotten in the snow.

Jack prevented him from entering Will's house once it was declared a crime scene, despite him being the one to notify him of Will's sudden drop off the Earth. Crawford argued that due to their romantic relationship, he couldn't help with the investigation, which infuriated Hannibal to no end. He blames Jack's incompetence for the gaping hole in his chest. Even now, Jack continues to fail Will.

The pit in his stomach that formed a year ago has only grown — he missed Will and was distraught that he couldn't find him. He was meant to join Hannibal for dinner that wretched night but had cancelled earlier that morning after visiting a gruesome crime scene. Hannibal couldn't help but repent on the thought, feeling like he should have insisted Will come anyway or go to him, eating dinner in his small office. At least then, he would have seen the man one more time or possibly prevented his disappearance. A million and a half what-ifs played on repeat in his mind.

Hannibal and Beverly never truly gave up hope in finding Will — the two have been meeting weekly during Will's formerly appointed time in his office, looking for any sign of him. Although he hadn't been his patient for over a year before his disappearance, he never filled it as Will would use the time to come over, keeping up their routine, holding the most captivating conversations of his life.

Thus far, their efforts have been fruitless. Hannibal couldn't help but feel as if he, too, was failing his dear Will. He already failed Mischa; he couldn't do the same for Will – he refused to.

Hannibal prepared langue d'agneau en papillotte with a duxelle of oyster mushrooms, a savoury dish he had always wanted to make for Will, so he felt it was appropriate for tonight's meal. All of his guests smiled as they were served the carefully produced meal, but the room grew a weary, uncomfortable silence when a plate was set at Will's empty seat. Hannibal took his own seat at the head of the table to the left of Will's.

"I feel it is appropriate to leave a seat open for him in hopes that he fills it again soon." He raised a glass of wine. "To Will, may he come home to us."

They all raised their glasses and took a sip.

The dining room was heavy with melancholy, and dinner was quiet for the most part, everyone feeling rather awkward about the loss of the profiler. It was hard for all of them to believe that it had been a year already.

A year since Hannibal had seen Will smile, heard his laugh or felt his rough, well-worked hands on his body. He felt his eyes gloss and forced the tears away, not allowing himself to appear vulnerable, especially in front of these people.

Everyone shared funny stories about Will, most revolving around strange things he says, likely when his mind is still wandering the halls of the latest killer's mind. Hannibal smiled at them cordially but did not find the stories funny in the slightest – none of them understood Will and constantly mistook his behaviour for a quirky personality. In reality, his Will was an anxious, overworked mess that struggled horribly with dissociation, and everyone invited to the table tonight contributed to the convoluted mess that became of him.

Part of him always wonders if Will had just got up and left, walking away from everything and leaving it all behind. The only thing that kept that thought at bay was the lack of planning for the dogs – their bowls were empty, the doors shut, and not a single note or message was sent to anyone with notification or warning. He would never abandon his pack, and that cruel fact reminded him that he was *taken*.

Someone took Will, and he may never see him again.

Shaking the thoughts from his mind, Hannibal returned to the harsh reality of his situation. He kept to himself, not wanting to share the intimate memories he has with Will – they were for them and no one else.

The smooth calm that was permeating through the room was halted when Alana spoke up.

“Should we maybe, I don’t know, hold a service? For Will?” She anxiously tucked stray hairs behind her ear.

Five pairs of eyes turned to her, and she visibly shrunk in her seat. Beverly was the first to speak.

“What the *fuck*, Alana? He’s still out there. We- we just have to find him.”

“No- yeah, of course. Sorry… I just thought it might be nice – for closure.”

Beverly scoffed, setting her utensils down.

“Closure for what? You might have given up on him, but not all of us have.”

“Beverly, I haven’t given up –”

“Sure sounds like it.”

“-- I just think it might be good for us. We don’t have to- to bury anything –”

“There’s nothing to bury, anyway, Alana!”

Alana looked to Hannibal, pleading, silently begging for him to take her side.

Hannibal swallowed and set his fork and knife down, appetite completely gone. Not that it mattered; everything tasted of ash for the last year, anyway.

“There is no need to mourn someone who we do not know is dead, Alana. If you wish to grieve him, then do so, but many of us firmly believe, or hope, that he is alive.”

Hannibal swallowed again, mouth going dry at the thought of either circumstance. The reality was that Will was either dead, decaying somewhere with no one to bury him, or he was alive. He couldn’t bring himself to think about what could be happening to him in that case.

Alana simply nodded and bowed her head, hands folded in her lap.

“I haven’t given up hope. I’m just afraid that we may never find him – dead or alive.”

The table remained silent as they finished their meals.

Within the hour, everyone was gone, and Hannibal was once again alone. He walked up to the bedroom and pulled Will’s flannel out of its spot in the closet.

That night, he cried, holding onto the shirt with a white knuckle grip, praying to any and all deity to return his love to him.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

The night Will went missing, from both Will's and Hannibal's perspectives.

Featuring Winston, the bestest boy.

Will Graham went missing last night.

He had stayed at work late, finishing up paperwork and analyzing crime scene photos to better profile a killer he believed to be the cause of several cold cases. Before he could go to Jack with this theory, however, he knew he needed substantial evidence.

Hannibal had invited him to dinner, but he cancelled after going to a crime scene of this killer's making. It wasn't that he was disturbed or distraught; he simply had to keep working. He had to find the connection he knew was there.

When he finally did leave, he was exhausted. He had lost track of time with his head in case files and groaned when he saw it was nearly 9:00 PM. Cleaning off his desk, he packed up his laptop, pulled his coat on and left for home.

The car was freezing, and he sat for a moment warming his hands before putting the car in drive. It was a long journey back to Wolf Trap, but let out a sigh of relief the moment the small white box at the end of his driveway that he called home came into view. He threw the vehicle into park and got out, quickly going up the steps to let the dogs out, apologizing for making them wait so long.

His pack ran out past his legs, and he grinned, watching them for a moment before he went to make them their dinner. It didn't take long to assemble the meal for them, set it down, call them in and make off for a shower. It was quick and steaming but helped him relax a little, his tired and aching muscles loosening under the hot water. Will heated up a can of soup for dinner with a piece of buttered bread, swallowed it down and crawled into bed. It didn't take long for sleep to consume him in the quiet, creaking home.

When Will woke, he was in a room he'd never been in before. His eyes were heavy, lids struggling to stay open, his tongue felt swollen and try in his mouth. There was a vague familiarity to this sensation – he had been drugged, with what, he had no idea. Will wasn't

sure when or how it happened; he went home, performed his usual routine, and fell asleep without issue.

Groggy eyes looked around the room, his head dizzy. Light grey walls surrounded him; from what he could see, there were no windows. He was laid out on a soft bed – one much more comfortable than the one at home.

The reality of his situation was setting in, panic swimming through his veins – someone had taken him.

There was a lamp on on the bedside table, illuminating very little. He went to sit up but was caught – his wrists and ankles were bound to the bedframe. Will's breath caught, his heart pounding in his ribcage. His eyes scanned the room as far as he could see but could see no way out besides the one door. Up in the corner near the ceiling was a small red light – whoever took him was watching, likely recording.

More than anything, he wanted to scream, to cry, but there was no time for fear – he had to get out of there.

Several minutes were spent trying to wiggle out of his restraints, all of which failed. His arms were too far from one another to dislocate his thumb and free a hand from handcuffs, and his feet were useless in the situation. The metal chafed against his skin, nearly breaking through it the harder he pulled.

The door opened with a soft creak. His eyes shot up immediately, needing to know who took him and where he was – a million different questions were running through his mind.

Will never once expected to see Dr. Frederick Chilton, who stood grinning at Will with a tray in hand. For a moment, he hoped it was a hallucination or his brain failing to understand who was truly in front of him, his brain blaming the drugs still in his system. Part of him even hoped it was some cruel prank from someone at work or even Hannibal. Surely he would have woken up to someone breaking into his home.

His captor sauntered over to the bed, setting the tray down atop a dresser nearby. Once he reached the head of the bed, he looked down at Will, brushed a stray curl from his eyes and smiled.

"I see you're awake, Mr. Graham. I know you're confused, but everything will make sense soon, I promise. You are safe and will remain unhurt so long as you stay compliant. Do you understand?"

The sound of his voice confirmed that it was indeed Frederick. His stomach churned in knots.

"What the fuck do you want, Chilton?" Will spat out, slurring, seething. His head was spinning, and a wave of nausea passed over him.

Frederick sighed and gathered something from the tray he had brought in.

"I want to study you, Will. You and your magnificent mind."

He turned around, facing Will and held up a syringe.

“No! No, no, no. Get the *fuck* away from me, Frederick!” He pulled at his restraints, backing away from the man as far as physically possible, bed springs creaking with the movement.

“You need to calm down, Mr. Graham; this is going to help you do that. I promise to answer your questions if you’re good.”

Chilton held Will’s arm tightly, wrapping a band around it and feeling for a vein. Once happy, he injected the unknown substance into the man, who was thrashing around and screaming.

“Stop screaming, Will. No one will hear you down here.” There was a thick wave of annoyance in his voice.

Frederick soon gathered the tray and looked back at Will one last time before leaving.

“Rest well, Will.”

The door closed, a heavy lock sounding.

Will fought against the drugs and lost. His eyes closed, and his mind drifted far, far away from him.

Hannibal paced around his office, patiently waiting for Will. He hadn’t heard from him at all today despite several attempts to contact him. When his former appointment time came and passed, he started to worry.

Picking up his phone, he called Will again. It rang and rang, eventually ending at his voicemail.

He hung up without leaving a voicemail and sent off another message.

<< If you don’t answer me in the next ten minutes, I will come over, Will. >>

It delivered, but was never read. Hannibal let exactly ten minutes pass before gathering his coat and leaving for Will’s home.

Pulling up to the small cottage did nothing to ease the tension that had worked its way into Hannibal’s brow bone. All of the lights were off, including the one on the porch. All the dogs were running around, loose outside, barking and running up to his Bently. A pang of anxiety

formed in his chest; Will never let the dogs out this late unsupervised; coyotes and wolves were in the woods surrounding his house. He parked next to Will's Volvo, peeking in, seeing nothing out of the ordinary. Inside the house, no light was turned on, nor any sound of Will attempting to quiet them. What further worried Hannibal was the lack of presence of the man at the front door, investigating the cause of the disturbance.

He made his way up the steps and unlocked the door with the key Will had given him a few months ago. When he turned the key, no click came. The door was already unlocked. Glancing around the room before him, looking for any sign of the man, he found nothing.

"Will?" He called out.

Nothing.

There was a thick cloud of cologne in the room. It had a strong chemical smell to it, something bought solely for its label. Had Will invited someone over? Who was the mysterious man that had gotten so close to Will to be welcomed inside his home?

The bed was characteristically unmade, the sheets thrown back. Perhaps Will had suffered a nightmare, gone for a walk, or was in the washroom.

He knocked at the bathroom door, but there was no answer or light pouring out under the door. Opening it, he found it empty.

Some long-forgotten feeling dripped into him – fear. A bodily sensation he hadn't felt since a winter long ago.

Hannibal made his rounds throughout the house, calling out to Will, each time sounding more desperate than the last. No response came, and the house was empty besides the swarming pack at his feet.

He left the house without thinking, looking for any sign that the man was simply out for a walk. Winston kept close to him, which did little to comfort him as he would always go to Will – if Will were here, Winston would have run off to follow him.

Desperate yells turned to screams, hoping that Will was just around the corner, hidden by the trees. He made quick work following the well-walked path to the stream and found it empty. He and Winston walked back to the house; he had to figure out what to do. Making his way to the back door, Winston stopped, nose to the ground and tail wagging.

He followed the dog, hopeful that he would lead him to his lover.

The dog beelined towards the barn that sat a bit further back. He expected Winston to go to the door, but instead, he kept walking, guiding Hannibal toward the back.

"Will?"

He turned the corner, expecting to find Will, but was shattered to find an empty space. Looking over at Winston, he saw the mutt nosing at the mud. There lay a white cloth, footsteps, two long, deep crevices in the earth, and muddy car tracks.

Quickly analyzing the scene before him, it was clear that someone had parked behind the barn and dragged Will's body to it. Stepping forward, he looked carefully at the rag. Bending down, the smell hit him like a train, confirming his suspicions.

Chloroform.

Someone had taken Will.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

A glimpse into Chilton's unorthodox therapy and masochism.

Chapter Notes

TW/CW: Physical and mental abuse/literal torture. Don't ask me why I wrote this, sorry Will.

Dr. Frederick Chilton spent several weeks getting Will used to his new surroundings. He provided him with all of the essentials – a bed, toilet and sink. Anytime he needed to bathe, he would take him himself.

Most of the time, Will was drugged out of his mind, barely conscious. He fed him twice daily, leaving the food on a tray in his room or hand-feeding him. All restraints have been removed except for a cuff around his ankle attached to a chain in the centre of the room, long enough to get around but unable to reach the door.

He was adjusting, and soon, Frederick would begin administering treatment. In the meantime, he was building up trust and routine.

Will had made several attempts to escape and attack Frederick, all of which failed and resulted in punishment.

Chilton was not afraid of physically reprimanding Will and did so without hesitation. Afterwards, he would whisper to him, saying he did not want to hurt him, but he had provoked him. The manipulation had a remarkable effect on the man; he even started apologizing after his punishments.

There was no physical attraction to Will, but he had to acknowledge that he was beautiful when he cried.

He had to admit that kidnapping the FBI’s most prized profiler was somewhat stupid to do, especially with his personal connection to Jack, but thus far, not a soul had suspected him of anything.

Will had never met Chilton before he took him, but Frederick knew all about Special Agent Graham. About his beautiful mind, overflowing with mirror neurons providing him with a

perverse amount of empathy and imagination.

He had to know everything about him – enter his mind, rearrange the furniture and observe.

Today, three and a half months into Will's abduction, he entered the basement with breakfast in hand. Upon opening the door, he found Will curled up in a ball on the bed, sweaty, panting and twitching, eyes wild under the lids. There had been an immense increase in Will's nightmares as of late; he presumed it was from the stress of his situation and left it at that.

Making his way to the bed, he shook Will to wakefulness. The man gasped, eyes looking around the room in fear. There was a look of recognition when his eyes landed on Frederick, reminding him of where he was.

"Good morning, Will. I've brought you your breakfast."

He placed the tray down on the bed as Will sat up.

"Thank you," Will replied, nearly whispering, voice gravelly as he caught his breath.

A sense of pride bloomed in Chilton's chest each day Will's behaviours changed, adapting.

"You're very welcome. I have to go to the BSHCI today, as you know, so I will not see you until tonight. Then, we will have another session."

Will froze at the mention of therapy.

"Do we have to?"

"Yes."

Frederick turned to exit the room. He would leave Will without sedating him today.

Chilton got home just after sunset and took a half hour to unwind. Afterwards, he prepped his materials for Will's session and made his way down to the basement. Passing through the faux closet and entering the room, he found Will laying on the bed once more, but this time backed up as far as possible, staring daggers into the door, and now Frederick.

There was a deep bruise on the side of his face that was healing, and his wrists had bandages around them from previous punishments where he was once more fully restrained. Will had

broken through the skin on his wrists as he desperately tried to escape the bonds. Frederick watched the live footage from the couch upstairs, shaking his head at the feeble attempts.

Will's body language gave the gut feeling that another round of punishment was underway.

"Will, please don't be difficult."

"I don't want to be drugged anymore. Please, Frederick… please."

The man's voice shook as he spoke, fear thick with each word.

"I don't trust you to be open with me, Will. You've proven to be quite secretive." He stepped forward, hand outstretched. "Arm."

Will's hands trembled as he pulled his knees up as much as possible, further shrinking himself into the corner. He shook his head, eyes pleading and glossy.

"Give me your arm, Will."

He stepped forward, a syringe of sodium amytal in hand.

"*Please*, Frederick." Tears spilled over, and his lip quivered.

"Will," he reached out. "I will not ask again. You know what happens when you don't listen."

The profiler hid his head in his hands, crying.

"Please don't make me hurt you, Will."

His body shook, racked with sobs. Chilton, losing his patience, turned on his heel and left to gather a whip. Once he returned, he looked at Will, the man's eyes filled with dread. Part of him had grown to look forward to these days when he got to hurt the man. He drank up the fear that poured from his body.

Holding his hand out for Will's arm, he started to count down.

"Three… Two…" He paused, giving Will one last chance. He did not take it. "One."

Without hesitation, he pulled the fragile man from his bed, dragging him out by the ankle and letting him slam onto the cement flooring. Will let out a pained yelp when his body hit the floor and cried out, pleading apologetically and offering his arm.

"I gave you a chance, Will; you knew this would happen."

The whip cracked when it made contact with Will, who screamed out in a ball on the floor. His shirt was pulled off of him so he could better view the fruits of his labours. Red welts blossomed along his skin, some opening, letting blood flow.

After several minutes of flogging, he was sated and put an end to Will's misery. His back was covered in blood, which pooled out onto the floor. He was sobbing violently, frame shaking,

waiting for the next hit. Between sobs and gasps came apologies.

Curling the whip up, he kneeled next to Will, gently brushing his hair with his hand.

“I’m sorry, Will. I know it hurts. You know I don’t like hurting you, yet you continue to push me. I just want what’s best for you.” In reality, he didn’t mind hurting him. All he cared about was learning how his mind worked – if it took breaking him to get that, then so be it.

He got up eventually to gather bandages. When he returned, Will was looking up at him, a livid swollen and split red line across his cheek, the wound crying tears of blood.

“I’m s- I’m sorry.”

His entire frame was shaking. Frederick approached, cleaning his wounds.

“I know, Will. I know.” He pet his hair. “But you really must stop provoking me. You know this will happen if you do.”

Will simply nodded, keeping his arms folded close to his chest while Chilton fixed him up. Once completed, he helped him get his shirt back on and settled back in bed.

“I will get you some pain medication and dinner now. Just a moment.”

Upstairs he put together a quick meal, making soup for the man, unsure if he could handle much more at the moment, and gathered Tylenol 3’s. He swallowed the pills without question. Drinking the soup took much longer than usual, but he was patient – Will was in shock and dealing with an incredible amount of pain. He smiled, watching his hands shake and eyes avoiding Chilton. Once completed, he took the dishes, turned the lights off and locked the door, leaving Will alone in the dark until morning.

Behind the door, he could hear Will’s quiet cries. He stopped for a moment, ear to the door, basking in the sound.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Will learns how long its been.

Hannibal received a gift.

It had been a year since Will went missing, not that he knew that. No, he lost track of the days within the first few weeks without the sun's bright guidance.

In this year, he had become quite the compliant little pet for Chilton; always doing as he's asked and no longer going on hunger strikes or refusing his medication and therapy. He was terrified of Chilton now – yesterday, the man had cut off his pinky finger without sedation as punishment. He had been on a week-long hunger and treatment strike, refusing to eat anything or let Frederick near him – he was hoping to either starve to death or for Chilton to go too far with his punishment.

It wasn't until after the amputation was completed that Chilton spoke again, revealing the true span of time he had been there, whispering a quiet "Happy anniversary, Will."

His hand was still bandaged from the surgery, and the absence on his hand filled him with fear and dread whenever he saw it. The pain was immense, but he couldn't stop touching the raw wound, reminding him of what was now gone.

Whatever happened to the limb, he was not sure.

Hannibal was enjoying a quiet night, composing a piece on his harpsichord in an attempt to free his mind of Will's absence which continued to ring through the house like a banshee. He was interrupted when a knock sounded at the front door. With a huff, he pencilled in his changes to the song and got up from the bench, striding towards the foyer, footing away the dogs.

Upon opening the door, there was no one, nothing but a scent of something familiar that he struggled to place. He looked out and saw his street, eyes landing on the vast emptiness in front of him. Confused, he looked down and found a small black box, closed with a golden ribbon. Hannibal hesitated to take it in, but curiosity got the best of him.

Taking it into the sitting room, he sat in front of the hearth and stared at it momentarily.

His long fingers slowly undid the ribbon, letting it fall to the side before he opened it. Inside the box, on a bed of flower petals, was a small, white card. Beneath it, a velvet bag tied shut.

He removed the card, opening it, two photographs fell out and inside was a printed message. Ignoring the photos for a moment, he read the letter.

Dear Dr. Lecter,

Happy anniversary! I must apologize for the delayed gift.

Inside lay the final remains of your darling Will Graham. Do not mistake me — he is still alive; however, he is undergoing a beautiful metamorphosis under my supervision.

He truly is a wonderful specimen. I've provided some photographs of him. I hope you can see how wonderfully he's changed.

He doesn't talk about you much anymore.

Take care,

Will's New Keeper

Rage poured over his body, seeping into every pore. His eyes read over every line multiple times, memorizing the patronizing words, a deep seeded feeling of dread clawing its way up his throat. Hannibal took a moment to scent the paper; it smelt the same as the invisible cloud at his door – the disgusting cologne he sensed in Will's home.

He set the letter aside and grabbed surgical gloves before continuing despite his curiosity. Once on his hands, he picked up the photos that fell.

He cringed when he saw the familiar shape of his Will asleep in a bed. His hair was long, and his body too pale and thin — he looked sickly and feverish. It was clear that the man was asleep in the photo, he was far too relaxed looking, and his lips were parted the way they did only when in a deep sleep. Will's limbs were tied to the ends of the bed, deeply bruised and irritated under the restraints. His inner arms were discoloured with deep purples and blues. Across his cheek lay a thick, angry scar. Most of his body was hidden beneath a thin blanket, but with his form stretched out as it was, he could see the unmistakable shape of his ribcage protruding from the rest of him.

Looking at the second picture did nothing for his ire. Photographed was Will's hand, minus a finger, giving him an idea of what remained in the box. The image of his hand gave him nothing the sleeping one didn't; he was pale and starved, likely dehydrated. The skin around his nails was ripped and chewed on, nails torn to the quick; Will always did have a terrible habit of picking when he was nervous. The amputation was amateurly done, and most definitely bled too much.

Before he could go forward, he took a moment to breathe, eyes welling with tears that fell from his eyes without permission. A wave of dread and relief washed over him, knowing his beloved was alive.

He pushed onward and opened the bag. Inside, as suspected, lay Will's finger. He held it up, placing it in the gloved palm of his hand, and tears poured from his eyes at the sensation of the cold, stiff limb. If his captor chose to kill him, this may be the only piece of Will he could bury.

Hannibal took a few minutes to steady himself. He examined the finger clinically and found no signs of decay, providing him with a few new details. Given the lack of ice, Will was likely close, likely within Baltimore. The minimal decay shows that the surgery was performed in the last day or so.

Winston lay at his feet, looking up in curiosity, remembering the smell of his master. He placed the finger back in the bag and removed the gloves to pet Winston, pulling him onto the couch beside him.

"I'm going to find him, Winston. I promise." He whispered into his fur, placing a gentle kiss on the crown of his head.

Hannibal pulled his phone from his pocket and dialled Jack's number. He picked up after a few rings.

"Hello, Dr. Lecter. I'm sorry, but there are no new leads." Jack sounded exhausted, assuming the reason for his call.

"Will is alive, Jack, and he's close."

"Yes, Hannibal, that is what we're all hoping for–"

"No, Jack. I know he is. I was sent a *gift*." He physically recoiled at the words slipping past his lips. The line fell silent as he prepared himself to voice his findings aloud. "They sent me photographs, a letter, and one of his fingers. In the letter, they said he was alive."

Another pause.

"Don't touch anything. I'm sending out forensics now. I'll be there soon."

With that, the call ended, and he stood, staring at the picture of the broken form of his missing lover.

An hour and a half later, Jack and his team were at his door, filing in to photograph, bag and remove the evidence from his home. Beverly took a moment, turning away from what she was looking at, while Jimmy did his best to comfort her – naturally, it did not work.

Jack interrogated him, asking for every little detail, all of which he provided. Jimmy declared a partial print on one of the photographs but was unsure if it would be enough to identify someone.

It didn’t take long for the small group to gather everything and remove it – they still had to confirm that the finger truly belonged to Will.

Once again, he was alone. Petting Winston’s long fur, he sipped on a smooth whiskey that he knew Will loved.

A few hours later, Jack called him and confirmed it was Will.

The partial was not enough.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Short chapter because I'm feeling evil :) Enjoy sad Will

A large part of Will still hated Frederick, wanted him to suffer or die under his hand — but he was too tired to fight anymore. He gave up entirely and succumbed to his new reality.

More than anything, he simply wanted to die.

Will was numb – he no longer felt anything, barely even pain anymore, even that was dull. He saw people and beasts lurking in the shadows of his cell and had nightmares every time he slept. There were constant fits, and his brain felt as if it were melting, the only bit of relief being the sedated hours Chilton allowed him.

Entire sessions passed that he had no recollection of, despite Frederick's insistence. At all times, he was too hot or too cold, his hands shaking and eyes wide from long hours isolated in the dark. When the light finally came, it was always too bright, forcing him to hide from it.

On the rare occasion that the light was bearable, he spent it throwing his body at any hard surface he could find, doing anything he could to try and end his suffering. There was a large, scabbed welt on the back of his head from countless hours sitting in bed, hitting it against the cement wall behind him.

He had no idea how long he was alone or deprived of light; he could no longer tell if his eyes were open or closed during the stretches of time without illumination. Voices surrounded him, reminding him that he was alone, that he would die that way or telling him he was already dead, that he was in hell or purgatory. He believed them, often talking to them, his only companions. They were the ones that told him to try and end his life; it felt like the best advice he had ever received.

Every now and then, his mind would betray him and wander to Hannibal or the dogs, to simple, happy days and long Sunday mornings spent in bed with his lover.

When his mind went to those places, he would become distraught, pulling at his chain again with a revived fight in his body, but he was too weak to make any difference.

He would never leave this basement again. Never touch sunlight or fish in his stream; never feel the warm embrace of Hannibal's strong arms. This was his life now, and it would never change. He could never leave this place, and if he managed to, Chilton would find him. He didn't want to think about the punishment that accompanied that.

He would die here, alone, and maybe that was okay.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Hannibal makes a connection.

A month has passed since Hannibal received Will's finger, and other than confirming it was, in fact, Will, nothing else came. The partial print proved not to be Will's, but it was too little to identify its owner.

Hannibal took a break from his practice, too distracted to be of any help to his patients. That morning, Jack called him. There was a brief moment where Hannibal stared at the screen, hope blooming in his chest at the idea of his beloved being found, but he pushed it down, refusing to get his hopes up. He answered the call.

"Hello, Jack."

"Hello, Dr. Lecter. I have a favour to ask of you — I understand if you're not up for it."

"What is it?" Hannibal was exhausted but intrigued.

"There was a murder at the BSHCI done by one of the patients. He's claiming to be the Chesapeake Ripper, but I'm not so sure." He paused, and Hannibal knew what was coming. "Without Will here, we need all hands on deck. If he really is the Ripper, that is. If you could come down and take a look at the scene, it would be greatly appreciated. Again, I understand if you aren't up for it."

Hannibal took a moment to consider the offer, part of him bitter that Jack never had this kind of consideration with Will. He hadn't killed anyone since Will went missing, far too distracted to bring himself to the task, especially when Will wouldn't get to see it. This killing presented an opportunity to temporarily retire the Ripper and get Jack's nose out of the case.

"Of course, Jack. I'll leave now."

"Thank you, Dr. Lecter. I appreciate it."

"No worries. Take care."

He hung up and left the house after ensuring the dogs were okay, water and food topped up.

Hannibal entered the BSCHI with great curiosity. He wondered if he were ever to get caught, which cell he would reside in, and how many locked doors it would lay behind. Surely he would be the most infamous inmate if that were the case — that's got to get you halfway decent accommodations.

What intrigued him more, however, was to see who was posing as the Chesapeake Ripper. He would be more than happy to confirm the falsity if the work was done adequately enough — it was one less pest on his back, and it's not like he was killing anyways.

His thoughts were interrupted by the gentle smell of Will wafting past him. Eyes shot up and looked around the hallway, finding no one but Jack, a couple of orderlies and Dr. Chilton.

It must have been my mind.

The group set off towards the hospital ward, and he did his best to ignore the subtle smell of his Will that his mind cruelly provided. It was distracting enough to be constantly bombarded with memories of the man; the last thing he needed was his brain to create an olfactory hallucination.

Before entering the infirmary, Chilton said something to Jack about him failing to catch the Ripper because he was already caught. Hannibal ignored it, still overwhelmed by the scent of Will and something bitter that permeated the air. Before he could locate a source, the men entered the room, orderlies remaining outside, and he was thrust into viewing the crime scene.

It was a replica of the Wound Man, a scene Miriam Lass had been investigating before they caught one another. It was a halfway decent replica, but it was clearly not the same man, at least to the true Ripper. He pretended to investigate the scene for several minutes, stopping the pacing and turning to Jack and Chilton. He declared, very confidently, that he believed the patient, Abel Gideon, was, in fact, the Chesapeake Ripper.

Jack looked defeated, Chilton elated.

"What makes you so confident, Doctor?" Jack asked, irritated.

"The wounds are a near exact match to a former scene," he lied, "and although the theatrics were done posthumously, it is a mirror image to the Wound Man Miriam was investigating."

Jack bowed his head, nodding, the mention of the missing agent cutting deep.

"I told you, Jack. He's been here with me the entire time." Chilton said, voice annoying and shrill as always.

Jack simply sighed, "We'll see."

The three men left the room and walked to Chilton's office.

That was when he smelt Will again. It was diluted and acidic, somewhat hidden beneath a wretched cologne, but it was him. And it was coming off of Frederick. His mind quickly began to sort through the massive catalogue of scents, delighted to find the correct memory. He had smelled this wretched cologne twice before, last year while searching for Will in his home and last month when he received his ‘gift.’

With a slightly tilted head, he watched the man, who anxiously glanced at Hannibal here and there. Licking his lips, he stared a hole into him, not shifting his gaze or hiding a semblance of rage from his eyes.

The longer they sat in the office, the more sure Hannibal became. This puny, pathetic, disgusting waste of a man knew where Will was. He was likely the one to take him.

A plan formed behind his eyes. He would get his Will back.

Once alone in the office with Chilton, Jack leaving to return to the bureau, he looked at the rat-faced man.

“Frederick, would you like to have dinner tomorrow evening? I would love to have you. Perhaps we can talk more about the Ripper.”

The incompetent doctor stood, fixing his shirt sleeves.

“That would be lovely; thank you, Hannibal. What time shall I join you?”

He smiled, teeth bared. “Would seven work?”

With a nod, the two men parted ways. Hannibal walked calmly to his Bently, already planning who he would serve.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Will suffering again

Will was beaten that night – badly. For what, he did not know. He couldn't remember the beating or what led to it, only that he woke in a horrible pain that radiated through his entire body. It was worst at his feet, both feeling as if they had been shattered. All four limbs had been restrained once more – it had been long since this had happened last.

He tugged at his restraints, hoping at least one would loosen. When he pulled at his ankles, he screamed, pain shooting up his legs. He sobbed, legs and body tensing, trying desperately to keep still and minimize the pain.

A tight tingling sensation formed in his stomach before he lost all feeling. Without Will's knowledge, his body shook, convulsing on the bed while his eyes rolled to the back of his head. His body seized for several minutes before it relaxed, alone in the dark.

When he finally woke, everything ached. The lights were on, and he was gasping for air, his body covered in sweat. He rolled his head to the side to where Chilton was sitting, with a bitter look on his face. From what he could see, no breakfast or medication awaited him. Lifting his head ever so slightly, he looked down. His feet and ankles were purple and swollen. Breath caught in his chest, and he struggled to breathe. Chilton poked one of his ankles, making him scream out.

"Are you done, Will?" He was angry.

He was in far too much pain to respond.

"I don't understand why you do this to me… why you make me hurt you."

Will whined, back arched and teeth grinding.

"I don't- I don't remember– I'm sorry–"

"How can you not remember Will? Hmm?"

Chilton stood, striding towards the head of the bed in two quick steps. He gripped Will's face between his hand, fingers digging into bone, the insides of his cheeks pressed against teeth.

Sobbing from pain and fear, he kept apologizing, unsure how he had broken the rules. He was so careful, doing everything he could to be good since Chilton took his finger.

Frederick pulled his sleeve up, revealing deep bruising along his forearm.

“You made another attempt at leaving me, Will. I thought we left that in the past…”

A hand came down, pushing Will’s head to the side.

Will cried out, head spinning and pounding, arms subconsciously tugging at the cuffs, metal cutting through skin, reopening old scars. Chilton got up and returned within seconds, syringe in hand. He stilled Will’s arm, frowning at the deep discolouration that saturated both of his inner arms from overuse – the injection sites Frederick had been abusing the entirety of his captivity were officially destroyed. Looking to his feet for a vein was useless – they were just as bruised as his arms and swollen beyond recognition. He scanned his body, looking for a vein and finding one on the top of his hand. Will was in far too much pain to care what Frederick injected him with; he only hoped it was morphine, a sedative, anything to take this misery away.

As is Will’s luck, it was his therapy medicine, not his sleep medicine. He cried as he felt the familiar feeling take over his body, a confused and drowsy fog taking over his mind, the pain only slightly dulled. He looked up at Frederick, grateful for the minimal relief. There was nothing he could do to stop the words from falling from his mouth.

“Kill me… p- please. Please kill me, Frederick.”

His eyelids fluttered, body relaxing in increments as the drug settled in.

“I could never kill you, you beautiful creature. Your mind is far too vast, desperate to be explored. You know that, Will.”

He watched as the man turned to leave, opening the door but not closing it on his way out. Frederick did this to him often – leaving the door to freedom open and just out of reach. It was a particular brand of torture that destroyed Will time and time again. The first few times he failed the test, Chilton waiting patiently out of view and laughing at him sadistically. Since, he had wholly given up, not even bothering to look out the door.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Hannibal confronts Frederick

Hannibal killed for the first time since Will's disappearance and found it far less satisfying than usual. Nevertheless, he needed to cook something special, a feast of some sort, one just for him and Chilton. He had every intention of keeping Frederick in the basement, feeding off of his pathetic body until there was nothing left.

A rude, idiotic sommelier served as the protein for tonight's meal.

Chilton sat across from him, a thick cloud of Will following him. Mixed with the base of Will's scent, an earthy one that smelt of evergreen, firewood and rain, was a thick layer of sickness and fear.

He ground his teeth, jaw tight. Halfway through the entree, he set his utensils down and looked at Frederick. The man noticed and gave Hannibal a confused look.

"Frederick, where is he?"

He visibly paled and stopped chewing mid-bite. Chilton swallowed down the flesh and attempted a relaxed laugh.

"I'm not sure I understand, Hannibal." He took a large sip of wine, unable to hide the stress that was building in his small body.

"Do not play stupid, Frederick. You know *exactly* what I'm asking you." He tilted his head, leaning forward somewhat.

"I- I'm sorry, Hannibal," he laughed humourless, "I have no idea what you're talking about."

He continued to cut his meal up, hands shaking somewhat.

"Where is Will, Frederick?"

Hannibal stood, turning to pick up the decanter of wine and refill their glasses. Chilton let out a pathetic laugh, mouth still full of food; the sound made his lip curl. Fear poured out of the man as he stood behind him, arm reaching forward to refill the glass.

Leaning down, he whispered, "I know you have him."

Blood rushed to Frederick's face, who sat frozen in fear and remained speechless.

Retaking his seat across from him, he took up his utensils, continuing to eat.

“Why did you take him?”

Coughing, Chilton cleared his throat, leaving his lies behind and coming forth honestly.

“I want to understand how his mind works; I’m sure you feel the same way. His brain is beautiful, Hannibal.”

“I’m well aware of how beautiful he is, Frederick.” He swallowed a bite of food. “Where is he?”

Hannibal has completely shed his person suit, not a single attempt made to restitch it or hide the wrath from his eyes.

“Well- Hannibal, you know I can’t tell you that–”

“Is he in your home?”

Chilton’s falter was all he needed to confirm that that was exactly where he was. He attempted to recover, spewing out a string of stuttering words, none of which formed an actual sentence. It was clear that Frederick was going to try and weasel his way out, make a break for it.

It was sad how predictable the man was – just as the thought rolled over in his mind, Frederick got up from his seat.

“I think I’m going to head home–”

Hannibal stood from his seat, a cool calmness over him.

“No, Frederick, I don’t think you will.”

He raised his hands in defence and backed out of the room, a nervous smile plastered on his face.

“I promise you, Hannibal, he is *fine*.”

Frederick bumped into a small table in the hall, a vase falling and breaking on the floor. While Chilton was distracted by the sound, looking at the mess he made, Hannibal grabbed a fistful of hair, dragging him back down the hall.

He let out a yelp, hands grabbing at Hannibal’s arm, trying to free himself. The grip tightened, and he smashed Frederick’s head against his knee, breaking his nose with a satisfying crack.

“Hannibal, please!” He begged, cries falling on deaf ears.

With a palpable rage, Hannibal dragged his guest down to the basement, throwing him onto the autopsy table and tying him down.

“You’ve made quite the unfortunate mistake of angering me, Frederick; been terribly rude too.” He pulled out a syringe, filling it with a substance that would temporarily paralyze him, but allow him to feel everything. “You touched what wasn’t yours, you pathetic, small man.”

Hannibal scrubbed his hands clean, rolled his sleeves up and got to work, a playlist of romantic era compositions playing in the background. Ignoring Frederick’s pleas, he continued.

First, he undressed Chilton, cutting away the cheap, blended fabric, then bathed him in a cleaning solution, carefully manicuring every inch of skin. Long fingers grabbed a scalpel; an incision was made in his lower abdomen. He would take the bare minimum for now, spreading the man’s life out as long as possible – he took only a single kidney, smiling devilishly at the still man beneath him.

He washed up after finishing the surgery and left Chilton alone in the dark, tied to the hard, metal table.

Upstairs, he tucked the organ in the fridge and went to Frederick’s coat, looting around in the pockets. He found two sets of keys; one with house and car keys, the other with several small ones reserved for handcuffs and restraints, and three for various other locks.

Climbing into his car, he started the ignition and took off for Frederick’s house.

It was dark out when he left, and darker now when he arrived.

A mirror to the day he discovered Will was missing, all of the lights were off, the world quiet around him. The knot in his stomach loosened somewhat – Will was in there somewhere.

He put on gloves and unlocked the door, cringing at the gauche decor while quietly making his way through the house. Checking the top and main floors, there was no sign nor scent of his beloved; he must be in the basement.

Pleased to have finally located it, he crept down the stairs. Will's scent grew more concentrated with each step – he was here. He looked around the basement, opening more doors; he found a wine cellar, which was half-filled, the doctor clearly only shopping for high price tag than flavour. He curled a lip and sauntered off, looking for his dear boy. Two more doors opened and closed before he landed on the last one – one in the back corner that looked like a closet. It opened, and inside was a second door with several locks.

Hannibal pressed his ear against the door, listening for any sign of Will. If he was anywhere in this house, it was behind this very door, the thick scent of him confirming his suspicions. He flipped the light switch that was beside the door frame, light and groans pouring out around the door.

He got to work on the locks, trying to find the right key for each one eager to get in and rescue his beloved. His hands shook horribly, curses pouring out under his breath each time the wrong key got stuck in the wrong lock. A pained cry sounded, and his heart shattered – he knew it was Will, that a small thing such as a wood plank was keeping them apart.

Eventually, the locks all opened, trembling hands tucking the keys against his palm. He tore the door open, eyes landing on his darling. A thick, sickly smell poured over him; a mixture of blood and hot acid attacking his nostrils.

His heart shattered as he glanced over his body. Will lay sprawled out on the mattress, limbs tied to the four posts of the bed frame, sheets barely covering him. He was dressed in dark grey pyjamas, but they were too large for him, likely having fit him months ago, but not anymore.

Pulling the keys out, a fresh wave of calm after finding Will alive washed through his body; his hands steadied, and he unlocked the restraints attached to the bed. One more remained — the one keeping him stuck to this cell. Before he carried on, he had to look at Will for injury.

"*Will*." His voice cracked out the name like a prayer on the lips of a dying man. His head drooped towards Hannibal, but no response came.

Hannibal's eyes and hands became clinical — calm and steady as they checked over his lover. Fingers found a pulse; it was sluggish but there. He was fevered and heavily drugged, eyes not opening, and when forced open, there was no semblance of recognition, his pupils shrunken to a pinhole.

He examined him head to toe, tears falling as he looked at the damage he had endured. His ankles had been shattered in the last few days, his body littered with bruising and scars. Will's hair was longer than he had ever seen and looked matted. The deep purples that were painted over the insides of his arms nearly broke him — Chilton had been injecting him with god knows what for so long he had collapsed veins; he treated Will like a science experiment.

Will's arms folded up to his chest, wrists bleeding from opened scabs, a pain-filled groan escaping his pale, nearly blue lips.

There was one restraint left on the poor boy — a metal cuff attached at the ankle. The swollen skin around it was a mottled purple, looking as if it would burst from under it. There were two locks on it; a padlock and a combination. Rather than running around the house looking for the answer, he forced himself to leave Will and find a bolt cutter in the garage. Within three minutes, Will was free.

Hannibal was terrified to touch the man, afraid of breaking his fragile form; he had only touched him to check his pulse and undo the bonds. Looking at the emaciated man before him, he couldn't help but think back to his sister.

Nevertheless, he pulled him up into his arms as carefully as possible, placing a gentle kiss into his hair. The pillow his head had been on was streaked with fresh and old blood, and beneath the thin clothes, he could feel several scars and bandages.

Breathing him in, he knew Will was sick and had encephalitis. It was advanced and had received no care — he had to get him to a hospital as quickly as possible.

Carrying him out of the house bridal style, he tucked him into the passenger seat, buckling him in and maneuvered his head to lay against the headrest. He let out a whine when the door closed.

Climbing in next to him, he held his hand tight, never wanting to let go.

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Will's hospital shenanigans.

Will woke to the sounds of beeping. It was a long-forgotten sound but one he used to be familiar with. He opened his eyes and cringed at the bright light blaring above him, instinctively raising a hand to shield his face – he was pleasantly surprised to find them lacking restraints.

With eyes closed once more, he took a moment to familiarize himself with the feeling of his body. A heavy feeling in his veins let him know he was drugged. He hesitantly attempted to wiggle his toes and was confused to feel them encased in some kind of hard shell. He couldn't feel much in the form of pain, but his mouth was dry, and he was dizzy.

Slowly opening his eyes once more, he faced the light and looked around, head swimming and nausea washing over him. His head whipped around in a panic after taking stock of his surroundings, not understanding what happened or how he got here – if Frederick was here.

He was alone in the room and pulled at the needles in his hand. The machine next to him flatlined when he removed the pulse oximeter, letting him know he didn't have much time to get out. He knew the punishment for leaving would be horrid, but it wasn't his fault – he had no idea how he got here. Still, panic surged through him, and he folded over, emptying his stomach on the floor, tears streaming down his cheeks.

A nurse came in trying to calm him down, but his ears rang, their voice muffled. Two more entered the room, helping the first to hold him down to the bed. A silhouette of a man stood in the doorway, but he couldn't see who it was. Had Frederick taken him to the BSHCI? Was he standing outside the door, watching?

He screamed out, begging them to let him go, telling them he had to go, that he would get punished – but none of them listened. With wide, glossy eyes, he watched as a nurse prepped a needle, shoving it into his thigh, despite his pleas to be good, for them to stop.

Before he could say another word, the world faded to black. The last thing he heard was someone yell out 'code blue.'

After dropping Will at the emergency room, Hannibal knew it would be hours before he could see him – Will was in horrible condition and would most definitely be in surgery for his ankles and feet.

In the meantime, he left the hospital to deal with dumping Chilton's car and staging his disappearance. First, he returned to the man's home, packed a suitcase, grabbed his passport and purchased a plane ticket for that evening heading to Barcelona. After that, he returned to the car, turned the engine and abandoned it with bags, ID and wallet in the airport parking lot.

He walked several blocks away from the airport before calling a cab, requesting to be dropped off at a bar near his home, and walking back the rest of the way. Finally, two hours later, he could drive back to the hospital and wait for Will.

Hannibal sat waiting room, Will still being worked on.

He was nervous, an anxious tapping taking over his fingers against his thigh. Jack, Alana and Beverly came immediately after he called; he claimed that Will had shown up at his door unable to speak. They all sat close together, each performing their own anxious ticks.

It had been hours in these horrible pleather chairs, his entire body aching, but he did not care. He waited and waited, and eventually, a nurse approached the small group, letting them know that he was stable and sleeping, but they could sit with him.

Hannibal sped forward, marching directly to Will's room after spending the last hours reading and rereading the floor map. He was about to enter when a nurse pushed past him, a shrill flat note sounding on the other side of the door. The pit in his stomach doubled in size, then tripled when a second nurse asked them to rejoin the waiting room, but he just stood there in shock, fearing that he had spent too much time playing with Frederick or that he had driven too slow – a million what-ifs played out in his head. The flat tone played on an endless loop in his mind. He failed to save Will.

A nurse and doctor pushed past him, and he heard Will cry out, begging them to let him go. Upon hearing his pleas, he closed his eyes, a crease forming between his brows. Hannibal stood in the doorway, watching the nurses wrestle a drugged-up Will back into the bed. More than anything, he wanted to go to him, to hold him tight, never letting go again.

A nurse touched his arm, asking him again to return to the waiting room, letting him know that the staff would do everything they could for him. He nodded and turned to rejoin the others when Will's cries quieted, likely from sedation.

"Code blue!" one of the nurses yelled out. Before he could stop himself, he entered the room, ignoring the staff that he was a doctor and looked over Will, who was seizing on the bed. Rushing over, he tried to reach out and hold him, but he was dragged from the room and

ushered back to the waiting room, forced apart from him again. It took everything in him not to rip the throats of everyone between him and Will.

Several more hours passed, and the sun began to rise, pouring in through the windows and warming the room. He had begun to get sleepy while bathing in the sun, head resting against the wall, but he managed to stay awake.

Eventually, a doctor approached the group and informed them that Will's test results were back. She confirmed that Will had encephalitis and a rather severe case of it – his treatment included steroids, antibiotics, plasma exchange and a concoction of antiepileptic and anti-inflammatory medications. Dr. Kaur informed the group that Will had recently had a seizure, which caused the delay in their entering the room.

They had done full body xrays, finding several fractures in his right arm, skull, spine, pelvis and left leg. There was a crack in the back of his skull, and he was concussed – the doctor said it looked self-induced. His wrists and ankles had all been damaged throughout the last fourteen months of constant irritation; all four, but especially his wrists, had a massive amount of scar tissue.

His inner arms were nearly completely destroyed from overuse, covered in bruising and a long, concentrated trail of track marks. Several veins had completely collapsed but would hopefully recover in time. Will's entire body was littered with scars, which the doctor said likely came from a whip. Due to his low body weight, he was declared anorexic and would be fed through a tube for the time being. His ankles had been shattered but have been surgically repaired.

The only silver lining, as the doctor said, was that Will did not seem to have any infections in his wounds.

Dr. Kaur believed that with time and several forms of therapy, he would be able to live a comfortable life again.

Hannibal sat silently, listening to the doctor as the list went on and on, a never-ending recollection of how beaten his love was. He stored the information away, filing it neatly in his mind palace for recollection later on.

Will was finally stable enough for visitors, but only one at a time until he says otherwise. She went on to mention that he was quite traumatized and warned them that he was hooked up to several machines and tubes, not wanting them to be scared when they entered the room.

Hannibal stood, claiming his spot as Will's first visitor; no one in the group argued.

He and Dr. Kaur walked quickly to the room, Hannibal in silence. They stopped outside his new room in the ICU.

“He is awake, but very groggy. He’s heavily medicated, so please be patient with him.” Dr. Kaur said to him, a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

He nodded, took a breath and opened the door.

Despite his years of practice in the emergency room, nothing could have prepared him for seeing Will hooked up as he was. Tubes and wires poured out of every part of him, his heart beeping low and slow on the monitor, and several bags of various medications hung nearby, dripping slowly into his hand.

Hannibal stepped forward, breath stuck in his throat and tears threatening to overflow. He stood beside the bed, looking down at the man, pain, love and regret filling his eyes. Sitting down in the chair, he took Will’s hand into his own, gently kissing his knuckles, thumb rubbing circles against it.

Will opened his eyes and turned his head towards Hannibal.

Oh, those beautiful blue eyes, how he had missed them. Even now, while clouded in a haze of drugs, confusion and trauma, they were beautiful.

“Will.” He whispered, voice shaking somewhat.

He watched as his voice entered his ears and started to process in his mind, dark brows furrowing. He desperately wanted to run his hands through his curls, but they had all been cut off, his head shaved down, making it easier for the doctors to work.

“... Hannibal?”

His voice was dry and cracked, barely above a whisper, as if he was too afraid to say the name aloud.

“Yes, darling, it’s me. You’re safe now.” He continued to pepper Will’s hand with soft kisses, breathing him in.

He watched the hesitance form in his eyes.

“Am I… dead?”

If Hannibal’s heart could shatter anymore, it would have.

“No, my love. You’re alive and in the hospital.” He kissed Will’s hand once more. “He’s gone.”

Will’s fingers tightened somewhat in his palm. His lip quivered, and his eyes welled with tears, looking into Hannibal’s own.

“Please don’t– don’t lie to me.” He sounded utterly broken, his voice and eyes so far from reality. “You- you’re not real.”

He tightened his grip on Will’s hand, standing to place a gentle kiss on his forehead.

“I’m very real, Will, and so are you. I would never lie to you.”

“I’m so tired.” He was sobbing now, “I can’t do this anymore.”

Hannibal sat on the edge of the bed, unsure what to say. It hurt him so profoundly that Will was so broken, so beaten and ruined. All he could do was gently brush tears from Will’s cheeks as he sobbed uncontrollably. His entire body shook, his breath struggling to catch up. He did what he could to soothe the man, but all he could do was hold his hand and wipe away tears.

Tears rained down his own cheeks, all left to fall into his lap so he could comfort his darling.

“I’m here, Will. You’re safe.”

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Will's hospital shenanigans pt. 2

The next time Will woke, Hannibal was sitting next to him, slumped onto the bed and holding his hand. The weight of his palm was heavy on his, but he didn't mind. His mind felt clearer than it had in forever, even as he cringed at the bright lights.

With narrowed eyes, he looked around him. He was hooked up to machines, needles and tubes in every direction. The sheets around him were comfortable and soft – he recognized them but couldn't remember where from. There was a shiver in his bones that he couldn't shake, and he continued to look around, eyes adjusting to the light. On a table by the window lay several bouquets of flowers, each with its own little card.

He was beginning to understand that he might not be in Chilton's basement any longer – that he might have escaped somehow and not remembered. It wouldn't be the first time he attempted to leave without recollection of the incident. A large part of him was terrified to believe that he was free, to get his hopes up just for reality to come crashing down – but it felt so real, more real than anything had in what felt like a lifetime.

Looking back down at Hannibal, he watched him. He didn't want to wake him, but he needed to hear his voice, to know that he was truly there. During his days in the dark, he had forgotten the sound of it, the smell of his rich cologne, the feel of his wool suits and satin ties. Memories of Hannibal flooded through his mind, and he started to cry.

If this wasn't real, he would do everything in his power to end it all.

His quiet cries seemed to wake Hannibal, ever the light sleeper. His maroon eyes peering up at him, bloodshot, swollen and tired. He grasped Will's hand, bringing it to his lips.

"Will, what is it?" He asked, accent thick with sleep.

A sob broke from his throat the moment it touched his ears. He sat up as fast as he could, cords and tubes pulling at him, but he ignored them to wrap his arms around Hannibal.

Holding onto him as tight as he could, he buried his face into the crook of his neck.

"Hannibal." It was all he could manage, voice raw from months of screaming and crying.

He felt arms wrap around his frail body, gently moving him to the side. Hannibal climbed into the bed, lying on his side. The two adjusted into a comfortable position, never once

letting go of one another. In his ear, he could hear Hannibal whispering in his native tongue – he did not know what he was saying, but it sounded like a prayer.

“My darling, it’s okay. You’re safe now; I’ve got you.”

Eventually, the two fell asleep together, wrapped in each other's arms.

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Final chapter!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will Graham came home one year ago.

He and Hannibal have moved in together, purchasing a home between Wolf Trap and Baltimore. Will didn't feel safe in his farmhouse any longer, refusing even to step foot inside. Hannibal wanted to free himself of the miserable memories attached to his home in Baltimore, ones formed during lonely nights without Will, and the two agreed to find a new home, together.

They feasted on Frederick's body, slowly, his flesh nourishing Will and aiding in his recovery. It was the least Chilton could do. Hannibal pulled his life along as long as possible, using every bit of him, refusing to elevate him. He was kept awake and aware during each and every surgery, and told what he would be making from his body. Once all flesh and organs were gone, his bones were cut, marrow eaten, and bone boiled for broth. The minimal remains of Frederick Chilton were buried deep in the ground at a national park.

Will has made quite the recovery, now walking without a cane, which he had used for several months with distaste. All of his injuries healed, some with nasty scars, others completely gone. Hannibal noted that Will never looked at his left hand, but often played with the empty space where a finger once resided – he could never bring himself to tell him that he had been the recipient of the lost limb.

His untreated encephalitis had left him with a few new aspects of Will; he still had the rare, but mild occasional seizure, was often tired, napping throughout the day, and had some memory issues. It was far from his fault, but it frustrated him nonetheless. No amount of reassurance made him feel any better about being 'broken.' The seizures caused Hannibal the most stress as they were unpredictable and came without much warning. One had occurred while Will was in the shower, causing his head to hit the tile, hard enough to break the skin. Now, whenever Will showered, he would sit silently outside the washroom, listening, making sure he was okay. They were currently on a waiting list for a service dog.

His psychological recovery is still taking time. Nightmares are frequent, but less so now. There are nights when he wakes up in the dark and starts screaming, thinking he has finally woken up from some cruel dream where he was free. It's difficult to calm him down from

these fits, but Hannibal does his best and has put nightlights in each room of the house, drastically reducing the cool-down period.

He was still paranoid and now hated being alone, something he used to love and say he needed to survive. Hannibal didn't mind; having the other within sight was reassuring for both of them.

Due to the nature of his torture, Will was quite therapy adverse in the beginning, but he slowly warmed up to it, knowing he would get to be sober, and that Hannibal would join him for the first dozen sessions.

It took several months and dozens of therapy sessions to get Will to stop doing everything he was told without question. There was a time when Will would adamantly refuse to do anything anyone ever told him, often doing the complete opposite – he missed that snarky, growling dog of a man, but he was on his way back.

Will's curls had made a comeback, which filled Hannibal with immense joy. He would often sit with Will, lap as a pillow while taking his afternoon nap, and carded his fingers through them, twirling curls between them.

Even now, he was watching Will as he slept peacefully in his lap, Buster and Winston curled up at his feet and his hand buried in Will's curls. His pink lips were parted, body wholly relaxed under his hand. Gently, he reached over, brushing a thumb over the scar on his cheek, then pulled Will's hand to his lips, placing a soft kiss on the inside of his palm.

Below him, he heard a light huff. Looking over, he saw Will smiling, eyes fluttering open and looking at him with adoration. The two smiled at one another, both saying 'I love you' simultaneously. Will laughed again, a light, airy thing, and reached up to pull Hannibal into a kiss.

Their lips pressed together in a gentle kiss.

At that moment, they were both at peace.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not super happy with how everything wrapped up, so I might come back and add/move stuff around later idk.

I hope you enjoyed it! I wrote this all in like two days back in May, so I'm sorry if its shit

End Notes

If you like this, please check out my other fic "I Slithered Here from Eden"

I'm new to writing, so please be kind!

Comments are appreciated! I wanna know what you're thinking :)

xx

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!